

TESTIMONY FOR RAISED BILL NO. 5526

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Bill No 5526 **"AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD AND AN EMERGENCY SERVICES POLICY COUNCIL.** My name is Steven Wolf. I am an emergency physician, director of an emergency trauma center, and chairman of the North Central EMS medical advisory committee and chairman of the statewide medical advisory committee that is legislatively tasked to advise the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health on EMS matters.

Since becoming involved in the state's EMS system around 1990, I have watched the slow evolution of EMS in this state. Much of the system is run on the backs of the hospitals and many individuals volunteer their time. The Office of EMS in the Department of Public Health is subject to the vagaries of the budget process, past realignment of governmental priorities, and has seen its budget slashed in the past that resulted in the decimation of the office at that time.

EMS, the third service as it is known, often is an afterthought with towns so much so that a few years ago we were successful with DPH in legislatively mandating that when towns have public events that require coordination of police and fire agencies they must include their EMS provider. One would think you wouldn't need to have to legislate that. Towns will pour money into their fire and police agencies and often skimp on the EMS component, ironic since often EMS touches more lives than police and fire. No disrespect to both. The fact is that people are living longer and are requiring more medical interventions as a result.

I am speaking in favor of the present bill; however Section 2 unfortunately was watered down from a multipage proposal to a small paragraph mandating a study by the Office of EMS at DPH. That concerns me greatly and I hope it's not just a "nice" way to kill an idea that has a lot of merit.

What we had proposed was frankly a small amount of protected money from a surcharge on moving violations and DUIs to fund an entity charged with working with DPH in synergy to help with initiatives, program funding and assistance with the running of the EMS system that is beyond the budget of DPH. In addition, this entity will allow for the receipt of both donations and grants similar to what Texas has done.

The plan was to help create stability and fund initiatives with consistency that is not possible with the waxing and waning of state budgets. This is not the result of a negative view on DPH or animosity. The idea is to supplement and work with DPH to go beyond what they are at times constrained in accomplishing due to funding limitations.

Maryland is perhaps the best example of dedicated funding for EMS. The entire system and agency is under 1 roof with state funds coming from an \$11 surcharge on vehicle registrations. As a result of this dedication to the funding and management of EMS, there is much less duplication than what exists in Connecticut and there exists statewide integration in Maryland that so far we can only dream about.

Much of what Maryland has and does is what I hope for EMS in Connecticut eventually. With funding from the EMS institute helping to augment the system, we are not proposing duplication, but having the resources to advance, advocate for, and promote the full integration of the system.

Respectfully,

C. Steven Wolf, MD FACEP

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